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THE SLEEPING LORD

Across the globe, the forces of winter and warfare – the Bane – have triumphed. Under the pretence of tracking down an ivory-poaching cartel, the Earth Champions of the Pendragon have been divided and picked off. In Hong Kong, Union Jack and T'Challa, the Black Panther, have been ambushed by Dolph, now a terrifying super-Bane, and his pack of Ninjas. The battle has left Union Jack dead and T'Challa hospitalised. In Germany, Albion has been captured and executed as part of a hideous, and successful, ceremony to resurrect the awesome demi-god of the Bane, the Red Lord. In Australia, Ben Gallagher has been slain after a savage encounter with a terrifying shark-Bane. Defeat now stares the Green Knight's soldiers in the face as the Red Lord marshalls his forces and prepares to march on Avalon to crush the Green Chapel once and for all. All that stands in his monstrous way is Adam Crown, newest incarnation of King Arthur who has returned from his sleep under the hill to rally his warriors once again, and Kate McClellan who even now faces the furious attentions of Dolph. . .

18 THE LAST WAR

Writers **DAN ABNETT & JOHN TOMLINSON**

Pencils **GARY ERSKINE**

Inks **BAMBOS GEORGIU**

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BEN'S DEAD.

AND JOE AND
PETER TOO.

THE BANE SUNDERED
OUR RANKS, DIVIDED
US, AND PICKED THEM
OFF AS EACH STOOD
ALONE AND VULNERABLE.

HERE IN THIS SYDNEY
HOTEL ROOM, I AM NOT
EVEN ALLOWED TIME
TO GRIEVE FOR THEM.

FOR I AM THE LAST
PENDRAGON, AND THE
BANE HAVE COME FOR ME.





NEW KOWLOON EMERGENCY
CENTRE - TWO KONG
TERRITORIES.

'A STORM IS COMING
MY LIEGE. A STORM OF
POISON AND DRAIN OF
FANG AND BLADE BARED
IN CRIMSON FURY
AGAINST THE GREEN. YOU
MUST CALL YOUR
PENDRAGON TO YOU...'



'TWO OF YOUR KNIGHTS
ALREADY APPROACH, ON
THE WINGS OF THE
OTHERWORLD - AND MORE
SHALL FOLLOW, BUT THEIR
KING MUST SOUND THE
CLARION CALL ...'



'...LET THE HARBINGERS
TAKE WING!'

'...PREYING ON
THE SMALL RODENTS
THAT FREQUENT THE
FOREST FLOOR AFTER
NIGHTFALL ...'



'...FOR IT IS THERE,
AFTER SUNSET, THAT
THE TALONS OF THE
WOODLAND'S GREATEST
HUNTER FINDS
ITS PREY...'



'...AND NOW, IF I'M
LUCKY, I CAN WITNESS
THE NIGHTLY RITUAL OF
DEATH THAT HAS TAKEN
PLACE SINCE ...'

'...BEFORE
THE DAWN OF HIS -
BZZZZTTTT!'



'...AND THERE! IN AN
INSTANT IT'S OVER,
UNTIL NIGHT FALLS
AGAIN...'



GULF OF CALIFORNIA, USA.

QUINJET TWO TO WEST COAST COMPOUND. TELEMETRY SET. INERTIALS LOCKED IN. WE'LL BE WITH YOU IN TEN MINUTES.



ROGER THAT, HAWKEYE. AVENGERS OUT.

WHAT D'YOU SAY, BUDDY? A LIGHT SUPPER, A FEW BEERS, A FEW HANDS OF CARDS? HEY? I SAID HEY! ANYONE IN THERE?

HUH? SORRY, CLINT, I WAS MILES AWAY...



WHAT THE HECK...? WHAT WAS THAT?

NO IDEA! INSTRUMENTS REGISTER A...

...BIRDSTRIKE...



...IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO STOP THE 'JET DITCHING IN THE GULF...

...WHAT DO YOU SAY, BUDDY? A HAND HERE MAYBE...

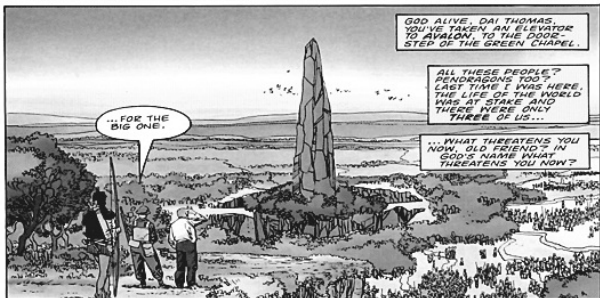


...I SAID... BUDDY? IRON MAN? WHAT ARE YOU PLAYIN' AT NOW? QUINJET TWO TO BASE, EMERGENCY! EMERGENCY!









GOD ALIVE, DAI THOMAS,
YOU'VE TAKEN AN ELEVATOR
TO AVALON, TO THE DOOR-
STEP OF THE GREEN CHAPEL.

ALL THESE PEOPLE?
BENDRAGONS TOO?
LAST TIME I WAS HERE,
THE LIFE OF THE WORLD
WAS AT STAKE AND
THERE WERE ONLY
THREE OF US...

...WHAT THREATENS YOU
NOW, OLD FRIEND? IN
GOD'S NAME WHAT
THREATENS YOU NOW?



QUITE A SIGHT.
IS IT NOT
FRIENDS?

THAT IT IS,
MATE. REMINDS
ME OF THE
MUSTERING FIELD
IN FLANDERS FIELD
THE NIGHT
BEFORE WE...

EXCUSE
ME...



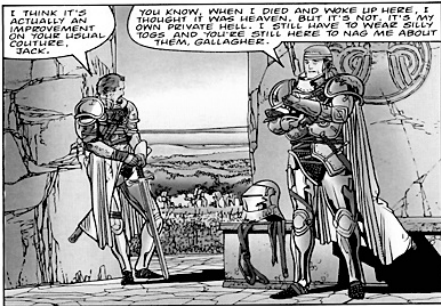
...ARE
YOU ROBIN
HOOD?

HA?
DON'T BE
A FOOL...



...LOCKSLEY
ONLY COMES UP
TO HERE ON ME.







SINCE THE EARLIEST DAYS MAN'S GREED HAS MADE HIM STAND AT THE SIDE OF THE RED LORD AND HIS BANE. THE BALANCING INFLUENCE OF THE GREEN KNIGHT, AS CHAMPIONED BY THE PENDRAGON, HAS GROWN EVER MORE WEAK IN THE FACE OF THIS IGNOMINY. NOW THE RED LORD MARCHES ON AVALON, TO DESTROY HIS ADVERSARY ONCE AND FOR ALL.



WE DO NOT NEED VICTORY HERE, BUT WE NEED BALANCE. AS LONG AS THERE IS AN EARTH, THERE MUST BE LIGHT AND DARK, SUMMER AND WINTER. THE DARK IS ABOUT TO OVERWHELM EVERYTHING AND WE MUST PUSH IT BACK AND STRIKE THE BALANCE ANEW.



THAT IS OUR TASK, NOT TRIUMPH BUT TRUCE. NOT ROUT BUT PARTING ON EQUAL, RESTORED TERMS. IT WILL NOT BE EASY. THE BANE OUTNUMBER US A THOUSAND FOLD...



... AND YOU MUST KNOW THIS. THE GREEN KNIGHT HAS USED HIS POWER TO BRING YOU HERE, BUT HE CANNOT BRING YOU BACK AGAIN.



THOSE WHO FALL TODAY, FALL FOREVER.



THAT IS ALL. THE DARK ROLLS IN. DO WHAT YOU CAN. I ASK NO MORE OF YOU.







'THEN THE BANE TIDE SWEEPED IN LIKE LOCUSTS AND ENGULFED OUR OUTER LINE. THE GROUND SHOOK, AS IF IN PAIN, AND THROUGH THE TUMULT, I HEARD THE RED LORD'S VOICE...



DESTROY THE GREEN LORD!



'HIS VOICE ALONE MADE ME WEEP. I DEEMED WE WOULD BE OVERWHELMED IN AN INSTANT...

'...BUT THEN THAT INSTANT WAS POSTPONED...

WITH ME, PENDRAGONS! FOLLOW THE LIGHT OF CALIBURN!

B-BEN?



UHHH! HORSES AND STUFF. GALLAGHER! IT'S NOT MY TYPE OF THING... I DON'T THINK I —

STAY WITH ME, JOE? IF NOTHING ELSE...



...WHEN THIS IS OVER, I'M GOING TO NEED A BEST MAN!

GALLAGHER! HAHAA! GALLAGHER, YOU LOONEY...





T'CHALLA...

YOU DRAW
THE YEW
WELL, MY
FRIEND.

I KNOW THE
ART OF BOWS, JOHN.
WHAT SACRED
POTION DO YOU
ANNOINT YOUR DARTS
WITH?



BEEZWAX. IT
GIVES THE
TURNING BODKIN
POINT ENOUGH
PURCHASE TO
DRIVE IT THROUGH
THEIR ARMOUR
INSTEAD OF
GLANCING OFF.

THAT
I DIDN'T
KNOW.
PASS ME
THE POT.



YOUR BEST
IS THIRTY
ARROWS A
MINUTE
YOU SAY?

I'LL SAY
NOTHING.
YOUR HIGHNESS,
SAVE THIS...

...SHERWOOD
WAS POORER
WITHOUT
YOU!



DAI...

'IT WAS LIKE A RIOT
AT CARDOFF ACHMS
PARK WHEN THE
ALL-BLACKS ROMP
HOME AND THEN
SOME. WORST OF
ALL, I COULDN'T
FIND TOMMY
ANYWHERE.'

HE HAD MY
LIGHTER
YOU SEE



'THEN THE
KNIGHT
APPEARED...'

THIS BLADE
IS MORE
RELIABLE,
BROTHER.

GAWAIN...



GAWAIN? I
AM GWALCHMAI,
BROTHER...

'THE HAWK OF MAY?'
IT WAS HIM THEN.
I NEVER SAW HIM
AFTER THAT BUT
ALL THROUGH THAT
LONG DAY OF
HORROR...

'...THE THOUGHT
OF HIM KEPT
ME ALIVE.'









GRACE ...



'THEY BEAT US BACK. I SAY 'US' ... I STILL HAVE DIFFICULTY SEEING MYSELF AS PART OF THAT ATROCITY.'

'THEY WERE HEROES, YOU SEE, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN THE PECS AND BICEPS MEANINGS OF THE NORD. THEY WERE PREPARED TO RECOGNISE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT WAS ESSENTIAL AND WHAT WAS SIMPLY ADVANTAGE.'

'AWAKENED AT LAST TO THAT CHOICE, I REJOICED IN IT...'



'YOU'VE RID MY SOUL OF THE BANE, YOU'VE DONE MORE FOR ME THAN I CAN EXPRESS.'

'HELP US AND THAT WILL BE THANKS ENOUGH. OUES IS A WAR WITHOUT END. TOMORROW THE BANE WILL TARNISH A NEW PATCH OF EARTH AND WE WILL BE CALLED ONCE MORE...'



'...FINAL BATTLES ARE NEVER REALLY FINAL, YOU KNOW.'

GOODBYE, BEN GALLAGHER. FOR THE SECOND AND LAST TIME, GOODBYE.



'DIVIDED SONS, FIGHT ON, FIGHT ON, YOU LACERATE HUMANITY AND TEAR THE EARTH APART IN VAIN, THE DEAD ARE ALL ON THE SAME SIDE; UNDER THE EARTH NO MORE THAN ONE, ONE FIELD, ONE SINGLE HOPE, ABIDE, AS FOR THE UNIVERSE, CAN ONLY BE ONE COMBAT AND ONE VICTORY.'
RENE ARCOUS, THE DEAD.

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Dear P2P,

I have been a comics fan for perhaps 3 years now and buy a lot of 'mainstream' comics, the type my local newsagent can supply, but none have the same impact on me as *The Knights of Pendragon*. I have been with you since issue one and have seen the story unfold (with perhaps a slow start) into easily the best comic on sale at the moment. Keep up the good work. Also, the artwork is great and complements the story very well.

Good luck for the future, and may you run and run and run ...

David Fulton,
Girvan.

Gratefully received words, David, but if you don't already know, this is the last issue of the first volume of *The Knights of Pendragon*. However, you'll be pleased to know that *Pendragon II*, as it will probably be known, is well under way, with the first script written. We're looking to launch at the end of Spring '92 as part of *Marvel UK's Genesis* series, which also includes Gary Erskine's new series, *Warheads*, which looks absolutely fantastic, and is written by one Nicholas Vince, whose past credits include the likes of *Hellraiser* for *Epic*. Stay tuned to the fan press for more on *Genesis* very soon.

Dear P2P,

This new Spanish story is coming along a treat. I like the OMNI/StarK crossover, and the contrast between Grace and Tony. Also Cam McLellan; it's nice to see an interesting character's past unfurled slowly. I also like Union Jack's new costume, although I think he looks better without the mask. Union Jack is an example of what Larkin called 'The Displaced Working Class Hero', who was rampant amongst post-war British Fiction. It's nice to see how he interacts with his more middle-class team members; there could be some interesting tension there. Enough pretentious nonsense – the artwork is great, very crisp, and I think that having two writers means that self-indulgence is less likely to get in the way of a sharp script. As well, the threading of the plot into an ecologically concerned subtext is great. It keeps the



PENDRAGON to paper

reader attentive to these issues, without ramming it down his throat.

Couple of minor things: will Jackie Crichton be making an appearance, or are your hands tied by your American counterparts? Will there be any more Civil Service intervention by WHO? I seem to remember from issue one that a cabinet minister was nobbled. Answers – we need answers! Steven Chapman, Teddington, Middx.

There are no plans to involve Jackie Crichton or any other Invaders-related characters in the storyline at present – although our hands aren't necessarily tied by Marvel US; in fact, our colonial cousins have been more than helpful. However, we do have plans in store for the venerable Sir Ian Chalmers MP – and I don't mean a general election ...

Dear P2P,

I'm writing in response to a recent rumour that my ears did take offence to; that *The Knights of Pendragon* will be cancelled upon reaching its 18th issue. Please say this isn't so! This has been the first truly spell-binding title to have appeared on the comic shelves in I don't know how many years and to stop it in its tracks after so brief a run would be most disappointing.

For once, it seemed that there would be an on-going series from Marvel that did

not dwell on senseless superhero vs. supervillain storylines but the true dangers that face the world today. Could it be perhaps that the masses choose to ignore the environment around them and submerge themselves in a virtual sea of spandex and superpowers? This does seem to be the problem, with most other forms of entertainment these days.

This is the first time I've been compelled to write to any comic in about 15 years of reading. I hope it does some good. If not, at least I've cast my vote and done my part to save the only conscious (socially, that is) book of the Nineties.

John Roberts,
Jacksonville,
Florida.

P.S. Thanks for bringing Union Jack back; it's been a bloody long time.

Again, thanks for your support, John, but sadly, it's all true. However, I hope you'll take solace in the reply above. I guess that just leaves me to thank all our American readers for their support – those that understood what the hell it was all about, anyway. I do hope that perhaps we did heighten the awareness of some people to the appalling problems our planet currently faces, with no change in the foreseeable future. Remember – there's plenty you can do to swing the balance the other way. You could read *Pendragon II* for a start!



Marvel Comics, 13/15 Arundel
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As this cycle of Pendragon hurries to a close, I'd like to offer my thanks to Gary for pushing his portfolio at me in Glasgow, and then proving he was better than I'd ever hoped ... to John (who was always better at Kate than me) and Steve (who sat in the Strife Pavilion) who both sought to patent their ability for collaboration without tears and with extreme good humour for the benefit of modern man ... to Bambos, for inkling his surname off ... to Kate Adie for being suitably disastrous ... to the readers and correspondents who have travelled with us and who seem to anticipate the next flowering as eagerly as I do ... and to Bruce Mitchell, Reggie Alton and Sarah Gyles Thompson who reanimated the dry corpse of Old and Middle English in their latest, and had it pursue me ever afterwards. And I'd like to thank a moment - being five years old and standing on the slumped stumps of Little Miss Kory, wondering what good it was going to do me. Now get away, or I shall taunt you a second time, Dan.

First, a great big special thank you to all the pencil-necked greys who voted for Dan and Dan alone in the Speakers Awards. I'll fix you. I'll fix you all. BWA. HAHHAHAHAHA! Thanks also to Dan, who actually deserves the acclaim, damn his eyes. Thanks to Gary, who never fails to amuse, and who researched each episode so thoroughly that his ex is still in deep cover in a heavily fortified 'Women's' Refuge somewhere on Roker's Island. Thanks to Andy and Bambos for all the ink that was fit to ink, and to Helen, whose crazed and kaleidoscopic colour schemes always made me worry that my slow-release capsules were wearing off (Euan was pretty good, too). Thanks to Simon Biles for giving me the cover art for K.O.P.6 completely free (God knows, I need the money) and to Alfred Lord Tennyson, who I ransacked and pillaged mercilessly for the Leds of the Lake's speeches. Thanks also for Worthington J. Kinklenfillos III, for 'In My Head Is My Only House (Unless It Rains)', for Green Magazine who gave us a review in the September, and for the Environment Protection Agency. Heartfelt gratitude (and awe) to the readers who hung tough throughout our labyrinthine plotlines, to Jane Seymour, Gerald Noyes and the Cheam Village Swimming Payers, and to my trusty bodyguards Skeeter and Kitten. Finally, applause a-plenty for Steve, who kept the train running on time, supplied a luminous quest of his own ideas and is now about to allow me one last peremptory question before the lights go down. It's been fun ...

Toong stood too Reddies

Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn.
And on the mere the sailing died away.

Until next time.

John.

Thanks to DJ Jazzy Steve and the Premiere Gary Dan for having the guts to offer me such a creative environment. Pendragon ... all at Marvel UK for a great two years to my contact renewed yet, Paul? ... John Carnell for my first script ... Dominic Regan for working through it ... Jane and Graham for making the tour such a great success and British Rail for getting me there (eventually) ... Jim Clements, Gordon Robinson, Flerways, and the AKA group ... my family and brother ... Nick Vince ... UKCAC and GLASCAC ... Iain Grant for his help on 18 ... Uncle Tom for spoiling our fun but keeping us on the side of common decency ... the girls at reception ... milk and cherries, Debbie and Louise, Zwimmers, the guys at Totan and anyone I've missed - you know who you are. Thanks for your help.

The Pendragon ensemble are now available for private functions, banquets and weddings. Give us a call - you know it makes sense! That's all folks! See you in Warheads!

Gary.

As Carmina Burana fades into the distance, it's now time to read the obituaries from the role of humour. At the top of the list are Dan ('This is the country where you live' Abnett aka Peter Hunter, John 'Zazzies' Tomlinson aka Ben Gallagher, Gary 'It's just a natural progression' Fekane, Jenns 'Drop the handcuffs' O'Connor, Andy 'Lanning who saved the first issue with a pad of tracing paper, the ever-impressive Bambos, Helen and Euan, Enigmatic Annie for her endless patience, Igor 'No Yugoslavia who always manages to get the pages through (sometimes)', Andy Seddon and Jacqui Papp, my trusty sidekicks over the past two years, Jane and Sam who hosted a gut for me, Mark who put up with my shouting, John Bilton for all the nice things I said, Bob Bakker, Michelle Pfeffer, The Nids (H.P.), Cantin and John Matthews, The Cool Hole where it all started, Gareth Vardy, Billy Combs, Ben Elton, Heathcote Williams, the F.I.A. who really need our support, David Attenborough, Jacques Cousteau on a veil of muck, barbers, Great White Sharks, Devonian shuls and F.I.H. F.I.H.I., many thanks to the lads of Nick Abadiz, John Higgins and Clare from IP who made me think that maybe we were doing something right this time. Cheers to you all. It's been real! Right, I'm off to MacDonaldis ...

Steve.

WHAT WAS SHALL BE AGAIN.

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